

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 020211Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2598

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBAWSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY USLO PEKING

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 1130

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR ASEAN MY XC

SUBJ: ASEAN, INDOCHINA AND THE POWERS

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 972

1. SUMMARY. DURING THE ASEAN SUMMIT MALAYSIA WAS CONSPICUOUS FOR ITS ADVOCACY OF THE NEUTRALIZATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND FOR ITS REITERATION OF THE WELCOME TO OTHER REGIONAL COUNTRIES TO JOIN WITH ASEAN. NOTWITHSTANDING HOSTILE ATTACKS ON ASEAN FROM HANOI BEFORE AND AFTER THE SUMMIT, MALAYSIA CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT ACCOMMODATION WITH VIETNAM IS NECESSARY TO ITS SECURITY AND THAT OF THE REST OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. END SUMMARY.

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2. AN OUTSTANDING CHARACTERISTIC OF MALAYSIAN PRIME

MINISTER HUSSEIN ONN'S APPROACH TO THE ASEAN SUMMIT IN BALI, AS EXEMPLIFIED IN HIS SPEECH AT THE OPENING SESSION AND HIS REMARKS TO THE PRESS ON RETURNING TO KUALA LUMPUR, WAS THE EMPHASIS ON ASEAN AS THE FOUNDATION FOR A ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY (ZPFN) AND THE CONCOMITANT GESTURE TO OTHER SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES TO COOPERATE WITH OR JOIN ASEAN. IN HIS BALI SPEECH, HUSSEIN SAID THAT "MALAYSIA SEEMS NO BENEFIT IN THE POLITICS OF CONFRONTATION" AND THAT "ASEAN REMAINS NON-IDEOLOGICAL, NON-MILITARY, NON-ANTAGONISTIC. IT SHOULD EXIST TO SERVE THE INTERESTS OF ALL SOUTHEAST ASIA.... ASEAN HAS SHOWN ITS READINESS TO EXTEND ITS HAND OF FRIENDSHIP, GOODWILL AND COOPERATION TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE INDOCHINA STATES.... I THINK IT CAN FAIRLY BE SAID THAT WE HAVE DONE OUR BIT, THAT WE HAVE GEGUN TO PLAY OUR PART IN TRYING TO OVERCOME THE PREJUDICES AND PASSIONS OF THE PAST. WE HAVE NOW GOOD CAUSE TO AWAIT THE RESPONSE." REGARDING THE ZPFN, HUSSEIN SAID THAT "THE WAY AHEAD WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ALL THE STATES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. IF WE HAVE FREQUENTLY ASSERTED THAT WORKING TOWARDS ZONAL NEUTRALITY WAS ALWAYS RELEVANT DURING THE YEARS OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN CONFLICT AND ADMUSTMENT, WE MUST AFFIRM THAT IT IS ALL THE MORE RELEVANT WHEN WE ARE ENTERING INTO A PHASE OF REGIONAL CONSOLIDATION; AND WE MUST ALL ADJUST OUR POLICIES ACCORDINGLY."

3. PRESS ACCOUNTS HERE QUOTE HUSSEIN SAYING BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FROM BALI FEB 25 THAT THE INDOCHINA STATES "NEED TIME TO ASSESS US, WHETHER WE ARE A MILITARY GROUP OR DIRECTED TO ECONOMIC MATTERS. WE HAVE TO CONVINCE THEM AND I HOPE THEY WILL INTEREST THEMSELVES IN ASEAN." HE SAID IT WOULD BE SELF-DEFEATING FOR ASEAN TO TALK OF A MILITARY PACT WHILE STRIVING TO IMPLEMENT THE NEUTRALITY CONCEPT AS THIS WOULD ONLY MAKE ASEAN'S NEIGHBORS WONDER WHETHER SUCH A PACT WAS DIRECTED AT THEM. ON HIS RETURN TO KUALA LUMPUR, HUSSEIN TOLD REPORTERS THAT THE NEXT STEP TOWARD THE CREATION OF THE ZPFN WAS FOR ASEAN TO APPROACH THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BIG POWERS, THE INDOCHINA STATES AND BURMA. "WE SHALL COLLECTIVELY MAKE THE APPROACH TO THESE NATIONS TO ACCEPT AND RESPECT THE CONCEPT," HE SAID, WHILE STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF WINNING RECOGNITION FOR THE CONCEPT BY THE BIG POWERS, THE ONES "WHO CAUSE THE TIDAL WAVES, THE INSTABILITY." HUSSEIN NOTED AGAIN THAT THE ASEAN COUNTRIES HAD EXTENDED THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP TO THE INDOCHINA STATES AND WERE AWAITING THEIR RESPONSE.

4. HUSSEIN'S ASSERTION SEVERAL TIMES THAT ASEAN IS STILL WAITING THE RESPONSE OF THE INDOCHINA STATES SEEMED TO BE A DELIBERATE EFFORT TO IGNORE THE FEB 22 STATEMENT BY HANOI THAT THE U.S. IS MOUNTING THE ASEAN SUMMIT AS PART OF ITS "SCHEMES OF INTERVENTION AND AGGRESSION" AGAINST THE COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. THIS CHARGE WAS CONTAINED IN WIRE SERVICE ACCOUNTS (CARRIED IN MALAYSIAN PAPERS) OF COMMENTARY IN THE HANOI ARMY NEWSPAPER QUAN DOI NHAN DAN WHICH CASTIGATED ALL OF THE ASEAN COUNTRIES EXCEPT MALAYSIA FOR THEIR LINKS WITH THE U.S.: SINGAPORE FOR THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT MIGHT OFFER THE U.S. A NAVAL BASE, THAILAND AND THE PHILIPPINES FOR THEIR ROLES IN THE INDOCHINA WAR AND THEIR U.S. BASES, AND INDONESIA AS THE "REGIONAL POLICEMAN OF THE U.S.," E.G. IN EAST TIMOR (SIC). HANOI WARNED THAT THE U.S. MUST NOT INTERFERE IN THE AFFAIRS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THAT TO DO SO WOULD COURT STILL HEAVIER FAILURES FOR THE U.S. AND ITS LACKEYS.

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5. TODAY'S (MARCH 1) K.L. PRESS CARRIED A SECOND HANOI STATEMENT WHICH, WHILE NOT MENTIONING ASEAN BY NAME, SAID THAT A NEW CONFRONTATION HAD EMERGED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA BETWEEN THE STATES OF INDOCHINA AND "NATIONS OF REACTION" BACKED BY THE U.S. THIS STATEMENT, ISSUED FEB 28 IN THE HANOI OFFICIAL DAILY NHAN DAN, NOTED THAT THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN SITUATION HAS CHANGED FUNDAMENTALLY FOLLOWING THE COMMUNIST VICTORIES IN VIETNAM, LAOS AND CAMBODIA, AND STATED THAT "THE COSTLY VIETNAMESE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE AND FREEDOM HAS ALSO BE INTENDED FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE JUST STRUGGLE OF OUR NEIGHBORS AND FOR THE BUILDING OF THIS REGION INTO A ZONE OF PEACE AND FRIENDLY COOPERATION."

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6. ACCORDING TO MFA PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INDOCHINA, CHOO SIEW KIOH, THE GOM TOOK SPECIAL NOTE THAT MALAYSIA WAS NOT NAMED IN HANOI'S ATTACK ON THE EVEN OF THE SUMMIT. THIS APPARENT SIGNAL PLAYED A PART IN HUSSEIN'S REITERATING DURING AND AFTER THE CONFERENCE

THE INVITATION TO THE INDOCHINA STATES. THE GOM FEELS THAT HANOI'S ATTACKS ARE MADE BECAUSE THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT FEELS COMPELLED TO COMMENT ON THE SUMMIT AND THAT ITS BASIC VIEW OF ASEAN HAS BEEN COLORED BY ITS EXPERIENCES WITH THAILAND AND THE PHILIPPINES. REFLECTING PM HUSSEIN'S COMMENTS (PARA 3), CHOO SAID MARCH 1 THAT THE GOM FEELS THAT ONCE HANOI HAS HAD A CHANCE TO DIGEST THE BALI SUMMIT, THEY WILL REALIZE THAT ASEAN IS NOT DIRECTED AGAINST THEM AND WILL CHANGE THEIR ATTITUDE. HE SPECIFICALLY SAID THAT HE EXPECTS A MORE FRIENDLY REACTION FROM HANOI WITHIN A FEW WEEKS. (INTERESTINGLY, CHOO, WHO HAD READ THIS MORNING'S SECOND ATTACK ON AMERICA'S SOUTHEAST ASIAN LACKEYS, DID NOT COMMENT ON THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN HANOI'S "ONE OF PEACE AND FRIENDLY COOPERATION" AND MALAYSIA'S ZPFN.)

7. COMMENT: THE MALAYSIANS SINCERELY BELIEVE THAT ACCOMMODATION WITH HANOI IS NOW NECESSARY TO THEIR SECURITY SINCE THEY DO NOT HAVE THE MEANS OF DEFENDING THEMSELVES AGAINST A HOSTILE, AGGRESSIVE VIETNAM AND THEY REALIZE THAT, WITH THE BRITISH LONG GONE TO THE

WEST OF SUEZ AND THE U.S. STILL NURSING ITS INDOCHINA WOUNDS, HELP FROM THE OUTSIDE IS UNLIKELY. THEY MAY NOT BE QUITE SO SINCERE IN THEIR PROTESTATIONS THAT ACCOMMODATION CAN BE ACHIEVED IN THE NEAR FUTURE, BUT CHOO CLAIMED THE GOM SEES HOPEFUL SIGNS IN HANOI'S LIMITING ITS ATTACKS ON ASEAN TO PERCEIVED UJLVS.# INFLUENCE ON THAT ORGANIZATION. PM HUSSEIN'S RECENT STATEMENT INDICATING THAT MALAYSIA WELCOMES ONLY AN ECONOMIC AND DIPLOMATIC U.S. PRESENCE IN THE REGION (REFTEL) SEEMS TO BE A PART OF THE EFFORT TO MEET HANOI'S CONCERNS IN THIS REGARD. END COMMENT.

8. FYI. HASMY AGAM, CHOO'S PREDECESSOR AT THE MFA,
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LEFT FOR HANOI FEB 7 WITH TWO OTHER MFA OFFICIALS TO SET UP THE MALAYSIAN EMBASSY. HASMY'S DEPARTURE HAD BEEN IMMINENT SINCE AS LONG AGO AS SEPTEMBER 1975, AND, ACCORDING TO CHOO, WAS DELAYED BY LACK OF HOTEL SPACE FOR THE ADVANCED PARTY. (CHOO DID NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT THE JAPANESE SET UP THEIR HANOI EMBASSY MUCH MORE QUICKLY AND WITH MORE SPACE AND HE INTERPRETED THE LESS EXPEDITIOUS HANDLING OF THE GOM MISSION AS A REFLECTION OF MALAYSIA'S RELATIVE UNIMPORTANCE IN THE EYES OF THE VIETNAMESE.) HASMY WILL ACT AS CHARGE UNTIL AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MFA UNDER SECRETARY YUSOF HITAM PROCEEDS TO HANOI, "WHEN THE VIETNAMESE CAN COME UP WITH A FOURTH HOTEL ROOM," ACCORDING TO CHOO. MALAYSIA AND NORTH VIETNAM ANNOUNCED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AT THE AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL ON MARCH 30, 1973, BUT HAVE MOVED SLOWLY IN SETTING UP MISSIONS LARGELY BECAUSE OF THE UNSETTLED CONDITIONS IN HANOI. ALTHOUGH THE GOM HAS FORMALLY TURNED OVER THE FORMER SAIGON GOVERNMENT EMBASSY TO A VISITING VIETNAMESE FROM THE DRV'S TRADE MISSION IN SINGAPORE, CHOO DOES NOT EXPECT HANOI TO OPEN AN EMBASSY HERE WITHIN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.
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